



A nonprofit corporation

# THE BIRCH BARK

Spring 2013

P.O. Box 148, Waterford, Maine 04088  
Winter: (207) 741-2930 Summer: (207) 583-4478  
birchrock@birchrock.org www.birchrock.org

Rich Deering '73, Alumni & Community Director • Michael Mattson '83, Camp Director

## THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF BIRCH ROCK CAMP

### REFLECTIONS FROM THE Rock

*By Rich Deering  
Alumni & Community Director  
'73 –*

A Birch Rock friend said to me the other day: "It must be hard for you to see the campers-counselors grow-up within Birch Rock for so many summers and then grow out of camp. How does that make you feel?" It was a heart-felt question that made me ponder and share this response:

The campers and counselors of BRC understand that community matters. It is the circle of life. Birch Rockers are stage players, sports team members, family siblings. They are young men who have an incredible opportunity to try new things, take risks, make some mistakes, and succeed in a nurturing and supportive environment with mentors who care. Birch Rockers learn about their incredible strengths, personal gifts and ability to "put their heads where their feet are." This camp community is an enormously powerful and positive place to build one's character and experience life in the moment. Birch Rock is a community of connection. There is a time that one needs be present; and there is a time to spread one's wings and fly from the secure camp nest. Yet, the BRC connection draws many veteran campers-counselors to return and give once again. Our extended camp community keeps us

*Continued on Page 2*

### ALUMNUS NEWSMAKER: BRUCE BROWN '55-57 – IN HIS OWN WORDS...



Portland, Maine native Bruce Brown is a beloved educator, art collector, respected curator and the savior of the Center of Maine Contemporary Art (CMCA).

At 71, he continues to champion the art community and has been duly recognized as one of the top collectors in America today. Bruce shared his BRC history with Rich Deering over a cup of "Joe" this winter season:

*RD: How did your family become associated with the Brewster Family and Birch Rock?*

BB: It was in my blood and family. My grandfather was Clarence Morton who owned Paris Manufacturing Company of South Paris, which made some of the earliest sleds and skis in the USA. He was a good friend of Chief and Onie Brewster.

When Chief Brewster expressed interest in building a camp on Norway Lake not far from my grandparents' summer cottage, Grandpa Morton discouraged Chief from acquiring the land and introduced him to the Sanderson Family on McWain Hill in Waterford. Smart move. Norway Lake seemed crowded....and McWain Pond was private and just right.

My uncle Hugh Morton, Clarence's son, was a counselor during the first few years of BRC. He carved the Birch Rock

sign and all the names of the campers at the beginning. He ran the shop for the campers. Later in the mid-50s, Hugh's son, David, picked up in his father's footsteps of running the shop, carving names, but Chief did most of the carving because time was precious.

*RD: What summers did you come to the Rock? Please share how you were hired and what your responsibilities entailed.*

BB: 1955-57. I had known of Onie and Chief Brewster for several years as they were such close friends of my grandparents and Uncle Hugh and Aunt Helen Morton, but did not meet them until early one evening in 1954. My family drove Cousin Dave Morton and another counselor back to BRC after spending the day off with my grandparents on Norway Lake. I was mesmerized. I loved the setting and enjoyed meeting several counselors: Fred & Curtis Scribner, Carl and Paul Brinkman, and finally, Chief and Onie Brewster.

What great luck because four days before camp opened in 1955 the Music Director withdrew his commitment. Cousin Dave suggested my name to Chief. He remembered our brief meeting so I went up for an interview. I was hired to lead the music for campfires and in the dining hall. I worked in the kitchen with Chef Albert and John Carroll and taught rowing too. I was by far the youngest staff member at the age of 15. Most of the counselors were 19 or older! It was my first job and I loved hanging out with the older, mostly college students. I felt like a young adult. Every day was fun and full of good things to do. Best of all was the camaraderie among staff members and the campers. There was a general positive spirit that defined Birch Rock at all levels. It was a comfortable place to be.

*Continued on Page 2*

moving forward with support, financial gifts and recruitment of new campers to fill our programs.

In this spring edition of the Birch Bark, we are honored to share a profile about our own **Bruce Brown** '55-57— *In His Own Words*. What an incredible gentleman and educational pioneer! Additionally, our graduating high school seniors (and future leaders) have shared their personal journeys and influences from the Rock. We hope you enjoy their unique stories, as we appreciate their commitment and willingness to share with you.

Finally, Birch Rock's **Alumni Day** will be held on **Sunday, July 28th**. This is going to be an extra special celebration as we honor our long-serving and beloved Janice Walker & Donald Munn. A special camper cabin has been built for the upcoming season and will be dedicated to these outstanding Birch Rockers. We hope that you can join the camp community for the day, Family Camp, or least make a visit to East Waterford this summer.

*Rich*



*Alumnus Newsmaker: Bruce Brown*  
*Continued from Page 1*

*RD: How did your three seasons at BRC shape your life as an educator?*

BB: I didn't decide to become a teacher until I was 29. But I remember how much I enjoyed teaching kids to row a boat, sing camp songs, or meet a challenge of one sort or another. I liked seeing kids master skills and gain confidence as a result.

*RD: When did your interest in art appreciation and curating become a calling for you?*

BB: My interest in art came as an unexpected surprise while I was an English teacher at Free-

port High School in Maine during a time when there was no art program, and the music offerings were limited. Knowing some students were interested in the arts I proposed teaching a basic art and music appreciation course through the English Department. I was trained in music, but not in art and so I had to learn all that I could. I began visiting galleries for the first time in my life because I wanted students to appreciate Maine's unusually rich artistic heritage. I had to learn that heritage myself. Very early on, I bought an expensive painting and that opened the door to an unknown world that has been important to me ever since. Collecting art on a teacher's salary was very limiting, but over time, as a collector, I was offered an opportunity to organize exhibitions in the summers at what today is the Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport. That, along with the purchase of the Stephen Etnier painting, were the two transformational moments of my life. When CMCA, now sixty- years old, opened year-round I retired after thirty years of teaching. I continued to curate as many as twenty-five shows all devoted to Maine artists every year until I retired in 2006. Now I am an independent curator, and in the last year organized nine exhibitions mostly in Portland, my hometown. This winter, for first time, I will be opening a gallery in Portland devoted to contemporary Maine photography and works on paper with a colleague in conjunction with the Maine Media Workshops in Rockport.

*RD: How does your passion for promoting Maine artists today relate to your Birch Rock experience?*

BB: Two important points: First, Birch Rock taught me to take risks and challenge myself. I was inadequately prepared to teach English. I had not even been an English major, but I accepted the challenge and enjoyed my 28 years as a teacher, the school's first Assistant Principal, and Director of Gifted and Talented Programs. I had no curatorial experience when offered the CMCA job in 1987 and stayed with it for twenty years. The greatest pleasure in my life has been to support and help others whenever possible. I am not an artist, but I greatly

admire those who are and if I am able to support their efforts – especially early in their careers – by including their work in an exhibition I feel fulfilled. Being an artist is not easy. I respect those who are willing to follow their calling no matter what the risks. In short, it comes as no surprise when I say: "Help the Other Fellow" has been the guiding principle of my incredibly rich life both as a teacher and art curator.

## BIRCH ROCK TRUSTEES

Lindsay Alexander  
Geoffrey Alexander  
Ryck Birch  
Toby Brewster  
Becca Brewster  
Seth Brewster  
Francie Campbell  
Nancy Dreyer  
JoJo Herzig  
Peter Herzig  
Michael Herzig  
Fred Howard  
Michele Howard  
Joan Koffman  
Julie McLaughlin  
Mark McLaughlin  
Allison Smith  
Win Smith  
Bob Stone  
Beverly Stone  
Bob Tuffy  
Gerry Tuffy  
David Weeks  
Arlene Whichard  
Bruce Whichard  
Libby Whittier  
Steve Whittier  
Amy Young  
Peter Young



ACCREDITED  
CAMP

American Camping Association®

# THE FUTURE

*By Bobby Stafford, '08 -*



Ever since I started thinking about college, everyone and his mother (especially his mother, in fact) would ask me what I wanted to study at school. When my friends were asked this question they would rattle off, "I want to be a doctor" or "I'm going to be an engineer." I, on the other hand, would murmur "I don't really know," and slink away from the topic.

Soon enough summer came around, and while my friends were off working in labs becoming doctors and engineers, I was at summer camp.

In the madness of my day, somewhere between the kids using me as a human jungle gym in the morning and having to strap them into bed at night, I managed to find a moment to think about why I wasn't in a lab. I might be working long hours, and I might be making less than a dollar an hour, but I was enjoying it. I didn't take the job because of the money, or the hours: it was because of the kids. I was having fun helping them learn how to kick a soccer ball, watching them grow from boys into young men among their peers. There would be moments where I wanted to pull my hair out over the latest shenanigans, but then I would witness the boys building friendships that will last their entire lives. That's when I realized I wanted to be a teacher.

The idea of being a teacher clicked perfectly. Looking back, I had always enjoyed working with the boys in my Scout troop. As an older Scout I was given the responsibility of teaching the younger Scouts how to use knives, tie knots, and defend themselves from packs of ravenous chipmunks on trail. Teaching the boys was about more than just the skills. The more important part of what they learned was cooperation, perseverance, and how to be leaders and teachers, like the older Scouts had taught me.

I want to use my college education to learn how to teach people, like the Boy Scouts or my campers - to help young people become both smarter, as well as people of stronger character. I want to take all of the knowledge that I would gain at College, and be the giant to help lift others up higher and advance everyone along with me.

*Bobby will be attending a college of his choice this upcoming fall.*

## LIKE US IN



Birch Rock Camp

# "GOOD MORNING, BIRCH ROCK CAMP!"

*By Eli Brewster, '05 -*



Birch Rock Camp is a summer camp located in Waterford, Maine for boys ages seven to fifteen. The camp sits on the side of a hill, overlooking McWain Pond, checkered with small white and green cabins filled with energetic boys and young men.

Even before I officially enrolled as a camper, my father, a former camper, counselor, and director, was raising me with the values

that come from this one of a kind place. 'The Rock' was built with one goal in mind, to teach boys and young men the many things that encapsulate what it means to be a true gentleman. There is no better environment to raise a young boy in than this place. Surrounded by excellent role models, supported by a strong community, and making friends that last a lifetime, this summer experience has impacted a much greater part of my life than just my summers.

A nervous, shy, quiet kid when I first went, looking back now I realize how much confidence, knowledge, and heart this place has given me. I've learned the values that will aid me for the rest of my life, the importance of community, integrity, trust, and kindness.

As a counselor I am still learning. I learn how to pass down the defining values of the camp, and how to give young boys a great summer at the same time. I learn how to go about life. When I was younger I may have been overly cautious and tentative, and at times I still feel I am, but after each summer at camp I emerge a more confident and resolute individual. When there's a porch that is leaning, put a rock under it. The porch isn't going to fix itself. Don't wait for someone else to put a rock under it, go and find a suitable rock yourself. If there's someone you don't know approaching you, step right up, "Shake a hand, and make a friend".

I hold this place in reverence, as well as the fine men who work and have worked there, my father, my grandfather, and my great grandfather. It is all something that I want to live up to. It's not a pressured feeling, but one of admiration. I want to be like the people who have given and those who currently contribute to this place. For their impact on me is far too great to take for granted, and it is only right that I pass the tradition of this camp on to more kids, the kids that remind me of my friends and myself 'back in the day'.

I often wake up at school and subconsciously stand right up and begin the new day, making sure to show no hesitation, not a hint of fatigue in my steps. I don't even realize that there are no young eyes watching me, no children following every move, evaluating each action. The camp phrase 'Lead by Example' rings in my ears all year long.

*Eli will be attending Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH this fall.*



# DIRT AND RECKLESSNESS

By Alex McLaughlin, '02 -



"Now that's the way to go up a hill," the portly fellow barked down at us in a heavy New England accent from atop his growling ATV. His method was admittedly hasty, but ours was definitely more fun. Since my toddler years, I have had a particular affinity for bicycles, and I have long since decided to share my passion with other young people. The feeling of shooting down a wooded, sinewy

trail lined with boulders and flora has certainly maintained its initial thrill. I, unenthused by the hooligan's four wheeler, thought to myself that using ATVs or dirt bikes is pointless because you do not have to work for the adrenaline-laden compensation that hides on the other side of the hill. There is certainly something oddly redeeming about hard, physical work. As our generously proportioned acquaintance rode off on his mechanical steed, leaving behind a trail of gasoline fumes and envy, the counselor leading the expedition assured us that we were ultimately going to have the most fun. Years passed and I gradually approached the front of the peloton, until this past summer when I finally started leading some of the bike trips. As a recent graduate of childhood, I can clearly remember the one factor that drives just about every decision at any time for an 11-year-old: fun. If I remember correctly, the two variables in the fun formula for an 11-year-old boy are dirt and recklessness, and, naturally, the more of each variable one has, the more fun one has. Now, due to my moral and legal obligations, I tend to emphasize the former variable rather than the latter. When I ride at home, I avoid the muddy patches for obvious reasons, but I had to rethink my strategies to appeal to the fun formula. Like my old counselor did years prior, I had to show those kids that you don't need something with horsepower to have a good time.

As I led the group down the hill and through the muddy ruts and patches that spotted the trail, I felt my tire catapulting filth directly onto the back of my fresh white shirt. I quickly became the proud owner of an impromptu and curiously colored splatter painting. I turned my head to the rear to see if my humble sacrifice was justified. The sight of five grinning faces bobbing to and fro through the wooded switchbacks was my reward. Even in this age of lawsuits and smartphones, we must occasionally yield to the seemingly naïve virtues of the 11-year-old. More often than not, it can benefit everyone.

There are times when I must play the part of the learner and times I must play the part of the learned. Believe it or not, we

are always learners, especially when we play the part of the learned. Childhood is about being a learner and having fun. My term is beginning to expire. Now it is time for me to be the learned; the facilitator. No matter how little I sleep, or how many white shirts I soil, I will continue to be the facilitator. The last thing I need to worry about is what the guy on the ATV thinks. This is the way to get up the hill.

*Alex will be attending Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD this fall.*

## FAMILY CAMP COME ONE COME ALL.....



Birch Rock's Family Camp provides an opportunity for families to experience camaraderie and recreation in the Maine woods on McWain Pond. These special days are designed for families to retreat and refresh themselves from the "work and school" world and rediscover their own enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Most of all, Birch Rock Family Camp is a time to relax and enjoy!

Family Camp is a wonderful venue for all ages to enjoy camp life in group activities or just do your own thing! Each family member may sign up for daily activity offerings which are facilitated by Birch Rock's talented staff. This program is offered from **August 16 – 20** with flexible days of attendance.

**For more information on these programs, please visit our website: [www.birchrock.org](http://www.birchrock.org) or contact the winter office @ (207) 741 -2930.**

# EVAPORATING INTO THE AIR

By Benjamin Foley, '04 -



Have you ever had a place that is just your getaway? The world is filled with drama that can knock you off your feet and send you into an endless pit. When your time at school enters this drama-filled pit, it can only get worse. With work,

sports, after school activities or even girls it gets harder to focus on any goals that you set out for yourself. Problems stack up on your out of school life, creating a monster bottling all your troubles together. I know that I am not the only one who has this issue: everyone needs to have a place to relax and just let everything out and let that monster go away for a little bit. Even if that little bit is just seven weeks of your summer. In a little town beyond Auburn, Maine there is a place called Waterford. In this town lies a small camp called Birch Rock. This is where I have lived my summers for seven years. This place isn't just mine, though - all 120 campers and staff enjoy their time at Birch Rock.

Though the time is short we all have the time of our lives. You are able to do any activity your heart desires. Birch Rock summer camp isn't like any other camp. Whether you are a camper or a counselor, becoming friends with everyone is the goal at camp. Parents might think that sending your kid away for seven weeks would change them completely and that is absolutely correct. Changing is smiled upon at Birch Rock. The kids learn things about themselves they never would have known: things like the perseverance to concentrate on launching an arrow from 50 feet away and hitting the "bulls-eye," or swim a distance of five miles around the lake. People all like to say they have done something with their lives, knowing that there should be more. Those who go to Birch Rock know that they have really done things that some people will never get the chance to do. Birch Rock allows everyone to see the world with a brand new view. The motto "Help The Other Fellow" has stayed with me for as long as I can remember. This is more than just words: this is how I live my life. I help those in need, and ask for nothing in return. Since my years at Birch Rock keep stacking up, I have risen through the ranks at the camp. I have been the youngest camper all the way to becoming a staff member. I, as well as most of the other staff or campers, remember the first day we stepped on that campus. Everyone is scared of his first day no matter how old. The staff then takes care of you as if they were not just your parents, but your friends. Every new camper who attends Birch Rock is feeling better within the week, and is ready to do something he would never have done outside of camp.

Though you're only there for perhaps seven weeks, the world around you disappears. The only thing you think about is Birch Rock and your fellow campers and counselors. As I leave to go to Birch Rock, I like to think about how I leave my school and home life behind to be at Birch Rock. I like to see all my problems drift into the air as if they were evaporating.

*Ben will attending the University of Maine in Orono, ME this fall.*

## WISH LIST

BRC appreciates your contributions to the camp community. Some items we wish for are:

- Framed Backpacks (\$100 each)
- Baseball Net Stop (\$500)
- Art Supplies & Equipment (\$500)
- Industrial Ice Maker (\$2500)
- Drill Press for Shop Program (\$300)
- New Archery Targets (\$500)
- Tennis & Baseballs (\$100)
- 3 to 4 Man Tents (\$200)

***Birch Rock Camp is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. All donations received are tax-deductible.***

Please email us at [birchrock@birchrock.org](mailto:birchrock@birchrock.org) if you might be able to accommodate any of those wishes.

**BIRCH ROCK CAMP NOW ACCEPTS  
VISA/MASTERCARD**

Thank you!

## ALUMNI DAY – JULY 28, 2013 –

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

*Let's ring the bell.*

*Let's swim in the lake.*

*Let's reunite and celebrate.*

*BRC's Annual Alumni Day*

*Sunday, July 28, 2013*

*This day will be dedicated to our beloved*

*Birch Rock Icons & Caretakers:*

***Janice Walker & Donald Munn***

*Please join the campers, staff and fellow alumni as we dedicate this special alumni celebration and Birch Rock's new Camper Cabin in their honor:*

**THE WALKER/MUNN CABIN**

*Details to follow.....*

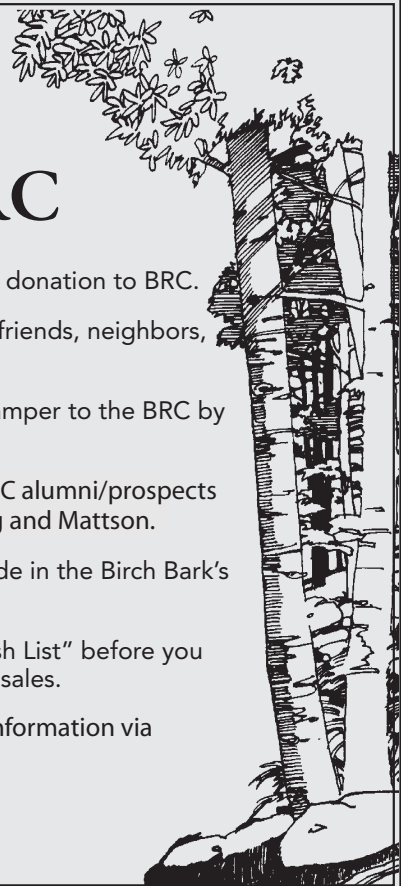
## Mark Your Calendars for 2013!



BRC Summer Office Opens	June 3, 2013
BRC Senior Staff Orientation	June 12
BRC Staff Orientation	June 14
C.I.T. Orientation	June 19
BRC Opening 1st Session	June 23
Cubs Camp I	June 23
Cubs Camp I ends	July 6
Cubs Camp II begins	July 7
BRC 1st Session Ends	July 20
Cubs Camp II ends	July 20
Opening 2nd Session	July 21
Maine Wilderness Adventure Cubs Camp III begins	July 21
Trustee Day	July 27
Alumni Day	July 28
Cubs Camp III ends	August 3
BRC for Boys ends	August 10
MWA ends	August 10
BRC Family Camp	August 16
BRC Family Camp ends	August 20

## It's Easy to Help BRC

- Send a tax-deductible donation to BRC.
- Promote BRC among friends, neighbors, family and colleagues.
- Refer a prospective camper to the BRC by phone or email.
- Host a gathering of BRC alumni/prospects with Directors Deering and Mattson.
- Send us news to include in the Birch Bark's Alumni News column.
- Ask us about our "Wish List" before you have your spring yard sales.
- Update your contact information via [www.birchrock.org](http://www.birchrock.org)



**BIRCH ROCK CAMP**

P.O. Box 148  
Waterford, ME 04088

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED